TITLE

"Planography : Development and Place in Indian Contemporary Printmaking"

SYNOPSIS

By

PIYALI PAUL

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Department of Graphic Art

Under guidance

Dr. Aditi Ganeev Sangwan

Aditi Ganeev Sangwan
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Kala-Bhavana

Visva-Bharati University

Santiniketan-731235

2016

Asst. Professor
Department of Graphic Art
Kala-Bhavana
Visva-Bharati University
India

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"Planography : Development and Place in Indian Contemporary Printmaking"

Introduction:

"In India, the technique of mechanized printmaking did not commence until Portuguese merchants established business at calicut, cochin and goa of the sixteenth century. During this time period, missionaries also utilized the printing press to spread Christian knowledge among Indians, at the same time British occupation, industrial schools, followed by art schools, were opened. Although these schools introduced printmaking courses, priority was given to teach it as a medium of reproduction, far away from creative exploration.

There is a strong graphic arts movement observed early in the nineteenth century. Art schools in Calcutta, Bombay, Lucknow, Lahore and other cities encouraged students to explore graphic media. But the combination of a shortage of trained teachers, and a lack of tradition within printmaking, made it difficult to establish an atmosphere of innovation within the art form, some of the artist were interested in graphic art, but due to the lack of a working atmosphere and proper understanding of the medium, their realizations were limited.

In the 1920s, printmaking as a creative medium seriously started in the newly opened Kala bhavan at Santiniketan under the expert guidance of master Nandalal Bose. Students experimented with various graphic media and covered a wide variety of subjects and purposes. One example of this new spirit is illustrated by Binodbehari and Ramkinker, the two outstanding pupils of Nandalal bose.These students, who became teachers, were unique artists, learning from various influences and expression from India, far eastern and European origin, developed their own concepts and style .In the process they produced a series of

prints, which are excellent examples of modern art in India.

Nandalal and Rabindranath 's concept of art education of that time in santiniketan, reminds one of the Bauhaus, an international school that started in Europe. The teaching atmosphere in Santiniketan, at that time, was totally different compare with others.

In the 1950,s printmaking began to open up. The culture relationship established with Europe after Independence helped. Indian artists learn more about printmaking. Many artists, with more sophistication began to explore the medium. All aspects of fine art printing including woodcut, etching, intaglio, lithography and serigraphy were being utilized by artist. Developments in technique occurred, but the combination of a lack of trained teachers and of a tradition of fine art printmaking, made it difficult to establish an environment of innovation within the art form.

Where as in Europe, printmaking was accorded equal status with painting and sculpture as a medium of expression, in India printmaking does not seem to have taken full root as a medium of creative expression in its own right. There have been admirable practitioners in the area that knew their medium and understood its beauties, often hailed as masters.

Education has been a prime cause of this situation. Young artists studying the graphic arts in school are urged to emphasize technique in their work rather than develop their initiative and curiosity. The system encourages them to emulate the passing fashions and as a result the young printmakers have become more versatile to words printmaking as medium of artistic expression."

So the subject of my research will cover the present circumstances of practicing planography in every institution and studios of India and to know how planography practice come in direct contact of contemporary world.

First of all, it is necessary to find out the exact position of pratice planography medium and I am also including what are other possible sources .Many individual artists are also working in this medium with various approaches.

Aims and Objectives of the Research:

My research is aimed to interrogate the following key areas:

- It is to research basically how the initiatives of individuals, collectives and institutions maintain the planography practice of making print art works.
- Also, it will be a search to find possibilities, methods and spaces through my observation of practice and experiment and innovation by various Indian artists.

My research will focus largely on development of practicing attitude and artist involvement.

"Planography : Development and place in Indian Contemporary Printmaking" will include information on practice and experiment on the subject along with theory. It is also important to go through many conversations, processes and experiments to develop a practice based research methodology.

Purpose of Research :

In India all major fine art universities maintain the traditional syllabus with practice of stone lithography in printmaking departments. It reserves a place of image making in terms of artistic expression.

Through the whole process of practicing of planography, I have developed keen interest to research on 'Planography' practice in India, which will help to know the placement and future of planography practice in art scenario. Through this research I aim to document and analyse following areas. These are -

- The studio position of practical planography process in India.
- Today, in India a large number of artists are working on this medium.
- Documentation of printmaking student will be part of research.
- Going through art works of student in different institution and documentation of their interest and art works is also important to locate future position of this medium.
- Through the planography process, I will research on the purpose of handling material like, stone lithography and offset lithography.
- How photography is being used as part of image creation through computer to print?
- Many contemporary artist and organization have opened private or community studios, so I intend to document on development and future of studio practice.
- The way of technical development and changes in processing and

material choosing. When artists are handling planography as medium.

- If any artist has invented any new technique, I will be documenting that area.
- Also my research will focus on pictorial aspect of their image making as fine art print.

Research Objectives:

- To document development of planographic art print practice as there is not much information available in form of theoretical data
- To understand how artists are responding to this medium in comparison to other traditional mediums - a critical study
- Future prospects in terms of technical development of planographic practice - medium oriented
- Understand aesthetics of the medium and how practicing artists are responding to it.
- To collect data from institution.
- To collect data from Artist.
- To search the untouched area of printmaking.

Printmaking studios in india:

- Printmaking is practice, which requires the absolute involvement of an artist in his studio.
- Printmaking production processes are complex and involve a variety of creative stations and methodologies. A printmaking studio is not a virtual studio but a physical domain of the artist creation.
- Printmaking has a long history of artist assistant collaboration. Printmakers start collaborating with others from the day they start collaborating with others from the day they start to learn printmaking.
- This process is hard labour by any measure and there is always exchange of technical ideas and methods between artist and apprentice.
- The studio invites exploration and trial and error based practice, through material exploration and various experimentation.
- The studio is both a laboratory for artists and an example of how a laboratorial space is central to an individual's learning and making.

So the studio equipment pushes me to search the area of practice.

Chapterization:

Chapter-1	Introduction
Chapter-2	History of Planography
Chapter-3	Development of Planography printing in 19 th century and 20 th century, India.
Chapter-4	Part one: Lithography. Part two: Offset Printing. Part three: Platography.
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Brief discussion on content of chapters:

Chapter 1

Introduction:

'Planography' is the term taken from printmaking medium. It is a technique, where image is printed from one plain surface to another .It, has traditionally offered the artist a wide range of possibilities in terms of surface quality and physical presence. In planography there are three ways of taking print–

(a) Lithography

(b) Offset printing

(c) Platography

Stone lithography was invented in 1771to1834, by Alois Senefelder, while its output has, by contrast, placed a greater on fine definition, continuous tone and a perfect seamless surface. At present, the digitally printed surface remains a delicate and precious membrane, in contrast to the variety of approaches that the surface is subjected to in traditional practice.

I would like to undertake a research project of lithography, platography and offset printing in fine art practice from this perspective.

In the history of lithography, technical developments have been driven not only by the aesthetical needs of the artist but by the commercial need to service an ever-growing desire for reproduction of

images. This innovation, around the beginning of the sixteenth century, also dramatically changed the level of skills required to process the plate, it enhance the speed drawing as well.

Similarities:

All of these printing methods require a flat and plain surface for image making.

Differentiation:

- These techniques have each different process of printing and image making.
- The printing and making of drawing of each techniques use different graining surface.

a) Lithography -The word Lithography comes from the Greek term 'lithos' stone and 'grapho' meaning to 'write'. The most common form of planographic printing is also the most wildly used printing process in the 19th century of the world.Lithography is a planographic printing process-

The stone used in lithography, is a space of flat, polished limestone. The natural antipathy between grease and water is the fundamental principle of lithography, so the first step in lithography is to obtain a surface on which deposited grease will be retained. Stone is the traditional lithographic surface. In lithographic print, the areas we want to transfer ink-the printing areas-and non printing areas are on the same level. This is possible by exploiting the feature that oil and water are mutually repellent .The non printing areas are water.

accepting and the surface in the printing areas is altered to be water repellent and ink accepting. A flat printing process of image making, texture wise it gives fine or bold grain .Through the graining stone, texture and effect depend on grain .Any greasy materials ,like touché ,crayon printing process - glass marking ,printing ink can be directly use for image making. Its tonal effect is solid and bold than platography and offset printing.

b) Offset printing - Offset printing is an indirect modern lithographic technological aspect. The offset printing technology is used for a wide variety of product. In offset printing, contrary to the lithographic printing, the substrate is not put in a direct contact with the printing surface. The ink instead transferred from the printing surface to the substrate via a flexible intermediate carrier called blanket, therefore the name offset. In modern offset printing, printing plate has replaced the stone materials as the printing surface. The surface of the plates can be altered to be either ink accepting or water attracting, often photographically. Photographic negative of the desire of image making which is printed directly computer to plate, it gives variety of size and tone wise it gives a digital effect. The basic principle of offset printing is that there are printings and non printing surfaces on a printing plate .This means that you can only print in full colour or non colour at all on every dot on the paper. An offset printing plate is typically an aluminium plate with the surface grained to be hydrophilic and coated with a thin layer of photo alterable material.

In the case of grained zinc and aluminium there is no appreciable absorption of the grease into the metallic surface: the grain alone holds both the gum-coating and the image, which can very from solid to broken areas of tone. The American Ira Rebel in 1905, developed zinc and aluminium plates begun their important

role. Senefelder himself had experimented with metal surfaces, particularly zinc, but mechanical and chemical knowledge at that time could not satisfactory develop his ideas. From Ruble's experiments in offset printing, plates and printing machines progressed rapidly.

c) Platography - Platography is a flat printing process, which done on aluminium and metal plate. It's. Surface made by fine grain. The possibilities of making drawing directly by glass marking and crayon without any photosensitive emultion.There is another possibilities to making image, by the x-rox toner and touché can be directly use on the plate.

Chapter-2:

History :

Alois Senefelder (1771-1834), was the inventor of lithography. The German technique of lithography took immediate roots in India. Besides its use for visual documentation of the people of India 'Lithography became hugely popular in producing images of gods and goddesses as new and easily available objects of worship. In contrast to the more traditional religious images involving lengthy, ritually changed processes of making them from stone. The new chromo-lithographic images became at once popular due to their charming colours, god in the image of man look and easy availability.

Originally Indian artists got their lithographs and oleographs painted in Germany. Eventually renowned Indian artist Raja Ravi Varna set up his own press employing German inks, he also employed a German master lithographer in 1890 established a big litho press at Malodi ,near Lonovala in India.

After invention of new lithography, its potential reached India very quickly from an article in the supplement to the Calcutta Gazette of 28th March 1811.

From Calcutta lithography spread rapidly a government press was established at Bombay in 1824 by Robert Mac Dowell, and a commercial press owned by John Morris, followed there in 1826.

Print and publishing to north India, after Calcutta established in Kanpur and Lucknow around 1830.Initially, there were only a handful of printing presses using movable type, the majority used lithography.

In 1822 the French artist De Savignac recreated as a lithograph, the first examples of lithographic illustrations were printed for a book, at the

government lithographic press in Kolkata in 1824.For the publicizing of printed picture of calendar, book and other publications grew in the 1870s and then took the popularity for fine art prints, several art studios and printmaking presses flourished all over India.

In the 19th century Bat-tala which is located of shovabazar of kolkata, that was the main centre for Indian printmaking activities.

Raja Ravi Varma was the first in India who used printmaking, not as an artistic medium itself, but as a means for his art to reach the masses .To achieve his purpose, he set up his own lithographic press towards the end of 19th century, known as the Ravi Varma press in Ghatkopar, Bombay .Here he printed his paintings as glossy oleographs.

The practice of printmaking as a fine art medium popularity with the establishment of kala bhavan founded by the Tagore's in 1919.An earlier organization also established by their brothers ,was the 'Bichitra club'- where the new style of printmaking explored .Artist Gagendranath Tagore took a special interest in lithography, and set up his own lithographic press in 1917.

Somenath Hore is the artist who contributed greatly to the development of printmaking in India. He continued to researched and experiment with various process in the field of practical printmaking and lithography.

K.G. Subramanyan and Lalu Prasad Shaw also did the lithography in 1979. Another contemporary artist, Hussain in print he introduce with modern technology .The characters of his prints are basically traditional ,while in their form they are completely contemporary executed in Photomechanical or electronic process .He groped for an appropriate technique for his temperament, he stumbled on the modern methods of lithography. We can say it offset lithography or planography .The facilities by the latest technological advancements opportunities for

variation from print to print in colour, tone, texture to getting new technology forced him to did lithography.

In the recent years, with the advent of computer graphics, different software programs, the notion of printmaking has changed dramatically. The classic hands on approaches have now been replaced by entirely automated on a computer technology can be created at the push of a button. This technology has led to some interesting variations on traditional prints, as can be seen in the work of artist.

Through the trade were slow in taking up the idea, zinc plates dominated lithography until the 1960s, when they were generally replaced by aluminium as the image carrier. Offset lithography was patented in 1875 for printing on tinplate and has steadily developed to become the dominant printing process in use today.

Probably the single most significant influence on the development of printing in photography in France , in the early part of the 19 th century .Many attempts to this new imaging technology, 'Photography' with printing were tried with very few successes. In 1920s that a successful application of the halftone process to gravure was developed.

In offset printing, it is not possible to vary ink thickness or density locally in print areas. To be able to reproduce a continuous tone image, the image has to be converted into halftone image. In a half tone image, the different tones are made up of dots of different size but equal density, The half tone dots can be modulated in a variety of ways.

In the late 19th century ,photography became popular .A process of photo engraving used halftone technology instead of illustration ,offset

printing is one of the most common ways of creating printed materials, compare to the other printing methods, offset printing is the proper high quality prints in a manner and economically producing large volumes. The traditional way is to divide the image into a structured grid-a screen- and in each screen cell an image element -a halftone dot -is varied to create the different tones .This is often referred to as amplitude modulated (AM) screening. Another way is to modulate the number, or frequency, of equal sized small dots, referred to as frequency modulated (FM) screening.

Research methodology:

This research is basically depend on collection data. It will be based on case studies. It will be an empirical research where rather than available theories on the research subject; it will more rely on case studies, observation, experience and experiment. It will finally lead to my culmination of theory and practical knowledge on planography.

I will go through following steps of research.

- Extensive literature survey
- Developing the hypothesis
- Data collection through case studies, interviews
- Analysis of data
- Generalizations and interpretation
- Preparation of the thesis.

1. Extensive literature survey and review

The literature survey will include relevant research reports, books, Journals, Text books, articles, published and unpublished documents. The collected information from the literatures will be critically examined and analyzed. I am going through the literature survey at present. A list of those books is given in the Bibliography. I am basically surveying books on social studies, historical and theoretical books on the subject. The books on subaltern studies will be surveyed more.

add

2. Developing the hypothesis

The hypothesis given in this synopsis will be developed more after the literature survey.

3. Preparation of the research flow chart

Then the research will be prepared so that data collection can be done more systematically. The research design will first locate specific areas to start the data collection. As my research will be mostly based on case study, interview and experiment it requires a questionnaire which will be made after the literature review.

4. Data collection

In this research, the data collection will be done through case studies mainly along with interviews, observation and experiments.

It will have following steps:

- Collection of available data
- Testing of available data, theories through a preliminary investigation on the particular issue of one chapter.
- Observation
- Preparation of Questionnaire
- Interview
- Comparative case study

After the case study the following steps of research method will be followed.

5. Analysis of data

6. My experiments

7. Generalizations and interpretation

8. Preparation of the thesis

Propose plan for field work and complination:

1. **Period of research:**

· Duration: 3 years

a) During first two years, I would like to collect data for the purpose.

b) Next one years, I shall compile the documents collection and shall be ready to pre submits of thesis paper.

2. **Data collection:**

Collection of relevant data or information will be learned on these ways on follows:

a) Review of literature

b) Collecting data from magazines, Catalogs and net.

c) Documentation of studio practice

d) Discuss with artist and taking interviews on their works concept and practice

e) Visiting to the museum and collecting data.

f) Visiting artist personal working studios

g) Audio video recording.

h) Photo documentation

i) Books references

Open-ended questionnaire:

- As an artist, how do you see printmaking as a medium of artistic expression?
- How do you think that it is different from other medium?
- Which medium do you prefer to work as a printmaker?
- What do you think of printmaking in current Indian art scenario?
- Do you practice any planography process?
- How and when were you introduced to this medium?
- What is the reason for your specific inclination to planographic processes?
- Is it aesthetic of the medium or technical involvement?
- Have you ever worked on offset printing?
- Is this concept new or it has been their since the developing stages of printmaking as a medium of artistic expression?
- Other than academic institution, where are good studio facilities available for doing planographic process?
- Do you know any other artist who has been working dedicatedly in planographic processes?
- In the era of digitalization, how do you see the future of printmaking process?

Close-ended questionnaire:

- Lithography and platography are both planographic printing process, so through your experiences which medium do you like to choose for continuing your work?
  a) Lithography
  b) Platography

- Which materials are easy to handle for your work ?
  a) Stone
  b) Plate(Aluminium / zinc plate)

- As an working contemporary artist which steps do you follow to improve your images?
  a) Single layer of colour
  b) Many layers of colour

- What do you think, why the planography did not take place of contemporary manual prints compare with other printmaking mediums?
  a) Proper studio space
  b) Lac of artist involvement

- Photo-process offer a tremendous challenge to the artist .Photographic images can be integrated into a powerful graphic statement. So, how can the photo-process consists of building a structure of images in planography medium?
  a) Exposing
  b) Transfer process

- Where colour printmaking is involved, there is innumerable variations of colour treatment and depth of the surface, how can you handle to making image in planography process?
    a) Using multi plate of creating image
    b) Other process

Literature survey:

First of all my research will go through literature survey in order to enrich the hypothesis and find out the problems of research more clearly. The books and articles that I have gone through for preparation of this synopsis are mostly on history of printmaking, Planography.

Types of literature that will be surveyed: Research reports, official reports, journals, articles, text books, unpublished literatures, catalogs, website , seminar reports, informative, theoretical and conceptual writings etc.

Subjects of literature: history, community, art and culture (aesthetic, traditional art, modern art, colonial art) etc.

Conclusion:

Printmaking ,as an art form consist of the production of images ,usually an paper but other support by various techniques of multiplication ,under the direct, supervision of or by the hand of the artist. Such fine prints, as they are known collectively, are considered original works of art, even though they can exist in multiples.

To the modern reader, the word 'print 'might suggest mechanically mass produced commercial products, such as books, newspaper and textiles. However, the prints refer to the original creation of an artist who has chosen printmaking tools to express him.

The fine print is a multiple original. Originality is generally associated with uniqueness, but a print is considered original because the artist from the outset intended to create graphic work and thus conceived his image within the possibilities and limitation of that technique. Without doubt, early printmaking was strongly influenced by a desire for multiple prints. Artists quickly discovered, however, that when a drawing is translated into woodcut, engraving it takes on totally new characteristics. Each technique has its own distinctive style, imposed by the tools, materials and printing technique or methods. The metamorphosis that takes place between drawing and print became the strongest attraction for the creative artist. It is important to understand that the artist does not select his printing method arbitrarily but chooses the one in which he can best express himself. Thus, any of the proofs printed from an original plate is considered an original work of art, and although most fine prints are pulled in limited quantities, the number has no bearing on originality, only on commercial value.

What is the difference between a reproduction and an original print? In the every early days of printmaking was not a serious

issue because the print was not looked upon as a previous art object. The question of originality became an issue only in the 18 th century and in the 19 th century artist started to hand sign their prints .Since then, the signed print has been accepted by most people as the proof of its originality.

Contemporary experimentation:

One of the most crucial changes in the 20 th century involved the size of the print. All through its history, with few exceptions, the print was considered an intimate art form, enjoyed by the few .The change started with the Lautrec posters: the print started to grow until it became huge size. As the dimensions of the print changed, so did its character. It became increasingly bolder and more colourful. Today the print often completes with painting, a situation deplored by many people who feel that in the process the print is losing its particular character and beauty.

Next to the size of the print, the greatest changes had been in the technology of colour printing .In this area, techniques have become so varied that particularly any effect is possible. The development has contributed to the vitality of printmaking, because it has encouraged the participation of colour-oriented artists. The combining of various media is closely related to the experimentation in colour printing. Each medium has its own capabilities and limitations, combined; the media often complement each other.

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